

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1107
By Herron

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Emmett B. Fields, former President of Vanderbilt University.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Emmett B. Fields, the former President of Vanderbilt University; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Fields was an exemplary public servant, consummate professional, and dedicated educator who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, a native of Fort Smith, Arkansas, Emmett B. Fields was a 1948 graduate of Ouachita College in Arkadelphia, Arkansas and earned his master's degree and doctorate from Vanderbilt University in 1950 and 1953 respectively. He would begin his career in higher education as an assistant and later served as a fellow in history at Vanderbilt before going on to teach U.S. history at Jacksonville State College in Jacksonville, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, returning to Vanderbilt in 1957, Mr. Fields was named Director of Summer Sessions and Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Science where he also taught courses in historiography and historical method, as well as U.S. and Southern history; and

WHEREAS, Emmett Fields was named Dean of the College of Arts and Science in 1960, a post he would hold until 1969. During this time, Dean Fields oversaw a major expansion of the student body, faculty and programs of the college, while also truly enjoying the camaraderie and professional interaction with his colleagues on the faculty; and

WHEREAS, leaving Vanderbilt in 1969, Mr. Fields was named Professor of History and Vice President and Dean of Faculties – the top academic officer – at the University of Houston. Quickly earning recognition for his exemplary work ethic and dedication to excellence, he was named Executive Vice President in 1971; and

WHEREAS, highly respected and greatly admired by his peers across the nation, in 1975 Emmett B. Fields was named President of the State University of New York at Albany, the flagship institution of the vast public university system for the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, in 1977, Mr. Fields would return to Vanderbilt University to serve in the new position of President, a post created by then Chancellor Alexander Heard and the Vanderbilt University Board of Trustees, reportedly with Mr. Fields in mind; and

WHEREAS, overseeing day-to-day operations as the chief academic and administrative officer of Vanderbilt University, President Fields ably served Chancellor Heard during the university's \$150 million capital campaign, bringing a steady hand, fiscal responsibility and direction to the educational mission of the institution; and

WHEREAS, launching a "reassessment" effort in 1978, President Fields led a comprehensive study of Vanderbilt's academic and administrative programs, establishing a theme of focused missions and elimination of peripheral or unsuccessful programs. Since his retirement in 1982, no other person has ever served as President. Current University officials have stated that his careful stewardship laid the ground work for many of the new initiatives in place at the university today; and

WHEREAS, after retiring, Mr. Fields passionately pursued his love of sailing; he spent two years aboard a 38-foot sailboat, the *Ishmael*, with his wife and cruised ports of call around the world, from Maine to the Yucatan, Nova Scotia to the Caribbean. The couple would sail together until the final days of his life aboard the *Hornblower*, another 38-foot sailboat; and

WHEREAS, deeply devoted to his family, Emmett B. Fields is survived by his devoted wife of 58 years, Christine, three beloved children, Ross C. Fields, Alison Fields and Leslie Fields, three treasured grandsons, Rylan Fields, Zachary Weishar and Ian Weishar, and one cherished granddaughter, Megan Vail; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Fields leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional educator, public servant, and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Emmett B. Fields former President of Vanderbilt University, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Fields.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.